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The Coast Guard Expands, 1865-1915: New Roles, New Frontiers

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in the dreamworld of pacifism. The author paints an interesting picture of what America was like prior to World War II.

The focus of the book is Ruhe's experience as a young naval officer, who in August 1940 returned to the United States after his detachment from the cruiser *Trenton* and joined the recently commissioned destroyer USS *Roe* (DD 418) as it began a busy year of fitting out and training. By Ruhe's account, the skipper, Lieutenant Commander Richard Martin Scruggs, must have been a clone of Captain Bligh of the HMS *Bounty*. However, there is a lot more to this book than the conflict between Ruhe and his commanding officer. It accurately portrays the prewar peacetime Navy: the scores for gunnery practices, which were of marginal value in preparing for war; practice torpedo firings that emphasized the torpedo's performance but not its exploder mechanism (which later in combat proved to be fatally defective); inhibited shiphandling by destroyer skippers whose fear of damage to their ships when mooring or coming alongside generated timidity instead of the boldness and precision that were required. It also shows how "rank hath its privileges" often resulted in poor leadership, which was damaging to morale. The skipper of the *Roe* made both operational and administrative decisions on the basis of what he perceived to be the most career-enhancing outcome. But the results often proved to have the opposite impact.

Finally, there are many lessons in leadership. Ruhe concentrates on the command style of only one destroyer captain, a martinet, and one junior officer, whose pride and high spirits may have exacerbated his situation. But the author's experience was not unique in the prewar and early war years. This reviewer served under a destroyer division commander who exhibited similar characteristics, generally abusing the officers of four ships. Later, the same individual commanded a squadron, where his attitude and decisions affected the officers of eight destroyers. The record shows that many martinets, and the majority of the officers who served under them, were highly competent and courageous in combat. However, Ruhe's commanding officer and my martinet commodore (like Captain Bligh) became decorated flag officers.

The U.S. Navy has always survived its Blighs. Most of us old-timers believe that it will continue to do so.

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King, Irving H. *The Coast Guard Expands, 1865–1915: New Roles, New Frontiers*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1996. 293pp. $37.95

In their first summer at the Coast Guard Academy, fourth-class cadets are sometimes called upon to sing the Coast Guard marching song, "Semper Paratus." The melody, a catchy tune, is not difficult; the lyrics, however, are another matter. They make reference to obscure locations, such as "Barrow's shores," and list ships that include unfamiliar names, like *Hudson*. The cadets

often learn these lyrics by rote, without exploring their meaning. But the cadets would find them less obscure if they were exposed to the history of the Coast Guard written by Professor King. The ships, their geographic locations, and the tales that go with them would become familiar and memorable.

Irving King is a member of the Coast Guard Academy's staff, and he is writing a series of books that chronicle the history of the U.S. Coast Guard. This volume is the latest in the series, and despite its cumbersome title it is a solid and welcome piece of scholarship. King explores the histories of the Revenue Cutter Service and its counterpart, the Life-Saving Service, from the end of the Civil War until 1915, the year the organizations were joined to create the modern Coast Guard. The author includes many exciting tales of shipwrecks, rescues, and battles; yet where he truly succeeds is in balancing these adventures with his discussion of more mundane issues, such as personnel practices, budgets, procurement, and bureaucratic infighting.

The book shows careful scholarship throughout. A fine example is his description of the destruction of an Alaskan native village after a hostage-taking incident, giving an account of the controversial event from both sides. He does not avoid describing problems, including excessive drinking, tampering with ships' logs, and abuse of political patronage. Thus we see not only the glamorous surface of the organization but also its guts and sinews, both its strengths and weaknesses.

King's work is rich with such primary sources as original logs, official documents, letters, and diaries. He arranges this volume in a rough chronological order, with chapters summarizing the service's operations and administration alternating with chapters devoted to major events. The summary chapters are rich in detail and well rooted in statistical data. Included are the accomplishments of Sumner Kimball, noted head of both the Revenue Cutter and Life-Saving Services; the exploits of revenue cutters on the new Alaskan frontier, most notably Captain Michael Healy and the cutter *Bear;* the adventurous Overland Expedition in which crewmembers of the *Bear* relieved stranded crews of the whaling vessels (one of the events "Barrow shores" refers to in "Semper Paratus"); and the role of revenue cutters in the Spanish-American War, in both the Philippine and Cuban theaters (the *Hudson* earned its place in the song off Cuba). The Revenue Cutter School of Instruction also receives a chapter; the author shows the events leading up to its current incarnation as the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut.

Two separate challenges to the Revenue Cutter Service's existence are discussed, the first in the 1880s and the second just prior to its merger with the Life-Saving Service. The echoes of the attempts at government reorganizations and budgetary struggles are still heard today, revealing that many "new" ideas have already been explored. The only thing lacking in King's discussion is mention of the broader historical context and developments in the maritime industry that affected the service's operation. This is a result of his nearly exclusive focus on the service itself.

After reading this thoughtful history of the last days of the Revenue Cutter Service and Life-Saving Service, I look forward to the next volume in the series. There has been much change in the Coast Guard, and no lack of events for King to chronicle. The Coast Guard's activities in this century have been considerable: participating in two world wars; creating an aviation arm; enforcing Prohibition; absorbing the Lighthouse Service and the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation; creating the Coast Guard Reserve and Coast Guard Auxiliary; and taking on environmental duties.

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Tracy, Nicholas. *Nelson's Battles: The Art of Victory in the Age of Sail.* London: Chatham, 1996. 224pp. £28

There is no doubt that Horatio Nelson's name will always be associated with victory. His tactical innovation, charismatic leadership, and devotion to duty have become legendary. Yet there is a definite shortage of one-volume accounts on Nelson's strategy and tactics, and this volume offers to fill that void. Tracy is a well known authority on the era of sail, but there is another compelling reason why we should read this work: it is one of the first under the imprint of a new publishing company, founded by the original directors of Conway Maritime Press.

The text is divided into five sections and a concluding epilogue. It also features a thought-provoking foreword by David Brown, a brief suggested-reading list, and a detailed index. The book is profusely illustrated with contemporary drawings of ships, equipment, and key personages, as well as official portraits. In general, they complement the text, are of good quality, and bear the mark of careful selection. The publishers have also included a collection of tactical maps depicting crucial stages of key battles throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. While the lack of detailed line drawings of various ships is disappointing, it does not detract from the utility of this book for its stated purpose.

The first section provides a very brief introduction to Nelson's early career, as well as a good summary of England's dependence on, and appreciation of, sea power. The second is primarily devoted to ships, sailors, equipment, tactics, and strategy during the early days of Nelson's career. The third analyses four battles, including Cape St. Vincent (1797), where Nelson first made a name for himself, and concludes with his first major victory at the Battle of the Nile (1799). The last two sections detail Nelson's greatest triumphs, Copenhagen (1801) and Trafalgar (1805). Tragically, the last victory was achieved at the cost of his life.

Tracy's narrative makes it clear that Nelson's tactics were based as much on innovation as on careful assimilation of the lessons of earlier battles. His impetuosity, dynamic leadership, and inherent ability to take the measure of the enemy's weaknesses and willingness to fight are the elements that define the "Nelson Touch." To his credit, Tracy